

REMARKS

The Office Action mailed February 14, 2005 and reference cited therein has been reviewed by Applicant. Applicants have canceled claim 127, amended claims 108, 126 and 128, and added new claims 144-153.

Independent claims 108 and 126 were rejected as being anticipated by Matsen 5,530,227. Claims 108 and 126 have been amended to clarify that the compression force transmitting material engages and supports the shell portion. Claims 108 and 126 also have been amended to require the shell portions to have a hardness that is greater than the compression force transmitting material.

Matsen does not disclose, teach or suggest to one skilled in the art that the compression force transmitting material used to engage and support a shell portion has a hardness that is less than the shell portion. Indeed, the Examiner acknowledged that the material forming the shell and the compression material are the same. As such, Matsen does not anticipate or make obvious the invention as now claimed. Applicants submit that independent claims 108 and 126 and all the claims dependent therefrom are allowable over the cited art of record.

Applicant respectfully submits this application is in condition for allowance and early notice thereof is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,
FAY, SHARPE, FAGAN, MINNICH & McKEE

By: 

ROBERT V. VICKERS

Reg. No. 19,504

1100 Superior Avenue, Seventh Floor

Cleveland, Ohio 44114-2579

Telephone: (216) 861-5582

Facsimile: (216) 241-1666